



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Virginia Man Pleads Guilty to Defrauding the Government To Collect Pension of His Deceased Father - More Than \$130,000 Collected Through Scheme -

WASHINGTON - Thomas F. Desanto, 58, of Herndon, Virginia, pled guilty today to defrauding the United States government in order to collect the pension of his deceased father, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Patrick E. McFarland, Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Desanto entered his guilty plea to one count of theft of government money before the Honorable Robert L. Wilkins of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He is scheduled to be sentenced on July 6, 2011, and faces a statutory maximum sentence of ten years of imprisonment. Under federal guidelines, Desanto likely faces a sentencing range of between 12 and 18 months in prison. As part of the plea agreement, Desanto agreed to pay full restitution to the government and also agreed to an order of forfeiture.

According to a statement of offense agreed to by the government and Desanto, the defendant's father received retirement annuity payments as a former federal employee until his death in April 1991. After his father died, Desanto took steps to defraud OPM so that he could collect the pension – a pension to which he was not entitled. As part of the scheme, on three occasions, Desanto took part in forging his father's signature on Address Verification Letters falsely certifying that his father was still alive. He then mailed the letters to OPM.

Based on these certifications, OPM continued to pay the annuity, which the defendant collected. In order to conceal his participation in the scheme, Desanto acquired a fraudulent Pennsylvania driver's license in a fake name that bore his photograph. Desanto used this driver's license to open a joint bank account in the name of his deceased father and the fake name on the driver's license, and directed the annuity payments to this account.

From May 1991 to April 2006, the defendant collected a total of \$134,639 in annuity payments to which he was not entitled. In April 2006, OPM discovered the death of Desanto's father by examining records of the Social Security Administration, and OPM halted the annuity payments.

In announcing today's guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen and Inspector General McFarland commended the investigative efforts of Special Agent Nunzio Orlando of the Office of the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management. They also praised the work of members of the United States Attorney's Office, including Paralegal Specialist Mary Treanor, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Bryan Seeley, who is prosecuting the case.

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